Washington's Newest Art Class.

An Interview in Which Miss De Land, the Charming Teacher, Outlines Her Plans for the Future and Tells of Some Students Who Will Reach a High Position in the Field of Illustrating---Excellent Opportunity Here for Good Illustrators.

IN all speculation that deals with Washington as a future art centre, a factor which must be reckoned with has made its appearance in the form of a class of illustrations at the Corcoran Art School. It is young—a mere infant of two months—but it is a healthy infant, a growing infant, and already gaining recognition.

The recognition, too, is of a material nature. Already, some of these enthusiastic young illustrators—there are about fifty of them—are selling their drawings. A few are decorating college annuals, others are doing poster work and getting paid for it; perhaps that is one reason why so many students have taken up the work in such a short length of time.

Art Long and Life Short.

There is nothing that brings home the force of the old saying anent art being long and life short to a young artist quite so much as the reflection that, even if he does accomplish something really good, he has either to keep it until he has grown grey or turn it into a Christmas present for some friend. Art for art's sake is all right; but unless one has the reputation, high ideals, even when combined with good work, will not keep the pot a-boiling. People of wealth, who have the money to spend for "portraits of their ancestors" and the life, usually engage someone whose reputation is already established to do the work. In the meantime, 99 out of every 100 students become wearied of worrying along, telling themselves that their work is "just as good" and that they are bound to be recognized after a while. The girls get married and live happy forevermore, painting cherubim on chinaware, or celluloid, and decorating fancy fire screens; while the young men take up something more remunerative, though less congenial, and try to forget the past. The hundredth student may make his mark.

The worst feature of it all is that a great many of those who give up might do something really good if they had the proper sort of encouragement at the right time. There is a steadily increasing demand for good illustrations. Publishing houses throughout the country need them, magazines and newspapers use them, and business firms who realize the value of artistic advertising demand them. Remington, Gibson, and Christy cannot illustrate all the books; Davenport and Dalrymple cannot draw all the cartoons, and a healthy demand for good posters is gradually on the increase.

Good Field in Washington.

In Washington there is an ever-widening field for illustrators. It is to be hoped that no one who reads the foregoing will infer that the class at the Corcoran is working solely with an eye to the pocketbook. This would be untrue. The students find much joy in their work, and, perhaps, no one takes greater interest in it than the instructor, Miss Eugenie de Land.

This clever young woman organized the class and teaches it for the sake of art rather than money. Miss de Land was a pupil of Howard Pyle, at the Drexel Institute, in Philadelphia. She has illustrated a number of books and stories, besides doing a great deal of newspaper work and the publishers are continually asking for more. She feels, however, that she has found her vocation. She is very much in earnest, and the "Washington School of Art," when it finally arrives, will owe much to her.

"We are doing practical illustrating from the very beginning," said Miss de Land to the representative of The Times. "The class has started on still-life studies. I want the students to become perfectly familiar with the technique before they attempt likenesses. After a while, of course, we will branch out and do all sorts of illustrating.

Three Classes.

"I have a still-life class, a portrait class and one in composition. The latter is choosing its own subjects and working them out, the object being to foster individuality. Prof. Andrews gives them a criticism every Monday morning. When the class becomes more advanced we shall take some book and illustrate it. You see, my idea is to do practical work as soon as possible."

Miss de Land does not mean inartistic work, when she says practical, a truth, which is immediately apparent from the accompanying drawings by members of her class.

"I suppose," said Miss de Land, regarding her interviewer, as if she were wondering whether he would really understand things, if she did take the trouble of explaining, "I suppose you expected to find us doing fancy heads and kindred work."

Her interviewer admitted that he had.

"I told you we were starting at the beginning," she said. "I want them to keep busy in the study of textures for a while yet. The rest will come later.

"My method? I don't know that I have any particular method. I am simply striving to teach them the things that Mr. Pyle taught me. At the same time I am not an advocate of too much teaching. I think the best plan is to let each one go ahead and work out his own ideas in his own way. I am merely on hand to afford assistance when some one requires it.

"The next step will be a class in facial construction. Later, when the pupils are more advanced, we will take up wash drawings; in short, we purpose going in for every branch of illustration and design. There is absolutely no tuition fee. Any member of the school who buys the necessary materials may come free of charge.

"I think there is a field for illustrators in Washington. A steady demand exists for the sort of things we are learning to do. You can say what you please, but there is nothing that encourages one in one's work quite so much as the belief that one will get some substantial return for it.

Individual Instruction.

"In both classes individual instruction is given. I try to manage things in such a manner that the students may secure instruction in any branch of their work, at any time. No one is pushed ahead or held back on account of the general status of the class. Each pupil is placed upon his own responsibility and is expected to work out his own improvement as the ultimate result depends, in a great measure, upon himself.

"The temptation to prophesy is always a great one. I don't care to fall into that error; but I am satisfied that I have three or four pupils, who will be very distinctly heard from in the future."

There is an atmosphere of energetic enthusiasm about both teacher and pupils that augurs well for the success of the class. It is no temporary fad with these young artists. They work with the serious earnestness that some day is bound to bring appreciable results.

That Miss de Land will materially assist in these results, is immediately patent to one who has had the opportunity of examining her work and upon whom the charm of her personality has fallen.

INTERESTING CHAT IN WASHINGTON CAMERA CIRCLES.

THE jury of selection for the coming exhibition of the Capital Camera Club will consist of R. N. Brooke, H. Hobart Nichols, Max Weyl, J. H. Moser, Mrs. R. C. Child, Miss Juliet Thompson, and Miss Mathilde Mueden.

The chairman of the jury, Mr. R. N. Brooke, is the president of the Society of Washington Artists. The other members of the jury are well known to all, and the approval of such a jury will leave no doubt concerning the merits of such pictures as they may select.

The wisdom of the exhibition committee of the Capital Camera Club in permitting exhibitors to submit unframed prints to the jury of selection will be heartily endorsed by all who have had exhibition experience, and the suggestion to submit a large number for the coming exhibition ought to bring forth an abundance of prints from which the jury can select the best.

The expense of the framing of exhibition pictures is by no means a small matter, and by having the prints selected before framing the expense for furnishing frames for pictures which do not pass the jury will be avoided.

In addition to this such a plan will afford the jury of selection an opportunity to offer valuable suggestions concerning the best manner of framing the selected prints, and such suggestions will be of great advantage in making the whole exhibition more harmonious than the framing would otherwise be, if left to individuals to select their own methods, or trust to those who have given the framing of exhibition pictures but little attention.

It will not be contended for a moment that the frame is of more importance than the picture, but that many a fine picture is handicapped by inappropriate framing no one who has studied the subject will attempt to deny.

As the pictures are to be submitted on or before April 5, a month before the opening of the exhibition, there will be ample time before the opening of the exhibition to carry out in a proper manner the suggestions of the jury of selection on the important question of suitable framing.

Somes of the members of the Camera Club have improved the opportunity afforded by the recent fall of snow, in making snow pictures. This branch of photography has never been popular with our local camera workers. This is probably due to the fact that the snow is so often here today and gone tomorrow, that a careful study of the most favorable conditions, and the opportunity to continue the work until errors can be avoided, is not possible in this latitude.

In more northern latitudes where the snow remains for weeks, and sometimes for months, successful and notable snow pictures are not infrequent.

Following the blizzard of 1899 very tempting cash prizes were offered by a well-known business man of this city for the best records of the blizzard period, and considerable prominence was given to the proposition, but owing to the small number of pictures submitted to the judges, it was decided to abandon the offer, as the pictures submitted utterly failed to furnish an adequate idea of that period when Washington was so completely snow bound, and the dangers of a coal famine were imminent.

Those who have seen "Home, Sweet Home," by Rudolph Eikemeyer, jr., and a "Winter Idyl," by R. E. Schouler, are deeply impressed with the pictorial possibilities of snow photography. In each of these pictures there is shown most artistic treatment of large masses of snow in the foreground, so represented that there is a feeling of real snow, and real winter. These are pictures which bring to mind more forcibly than it would be possible to picture by any word painting the dreariness and isolation produced in the North country when the roads are so blocked by snowdrifts that a passing team is a rarity and zero weather continues for days at a time.

I hope that every owner of a camera will visit the exhibit of the Park Commission, at the Hemicycle of the Corcoran Gallery, and examine the photographic enlargements that form so large a portion of the explanation of the means to be adopted in making our Capital City the most beautiful city in the world.

These enlargements, over 100 in number, are not exhibited as specimens of pictorial or of technical photography, and those who expect to find them examples of skill in either of these directions must of necessity have a feeling of disappointment.

As records of beautiful avenues, historic fountains, imposing architecture, and interesting bits from the streets, parks, and wharves of the prominent Old World cities, they furnish an instructive object lesson of the utility of photography in assisting us to understand what Washington may be when the best contained in foreign cities is a part of our own.

No one can fail to be impressed with the magnitude of the Washington of the future and with the labor involved in the development of the scheme, so forcibly presented.

In the photographic work of that eminent German photographer, Heinrich Kuhn, who has sounded a new key in the range of artistic expression through the medium of the camera, there is ample ground for the adherents of the "fuzzy" school and those who believe in extreme sharpness in photographic work to find much to admire.

Mr. Kuhn evidently belongs to a school of his own in which he combines the best of the advantages claimed by the partisans of the other schools. His published work shows an intimate knowledge of the technical side of the photographic science, combined with the knowledge of the art of the painter in the portrayal of tone values.

In portrait work Mr. Kuhn shows a strong grasp of the ideal side of portraiture. His portraits make you feel that his models are creatures of life, untrammeled by the conventionalities of the studio, or overshadowed by the immature judgment of the man behind the camera. To this is added a clear conception of the proper value of flesh tones, and the subordination of unimportant accessories or costumes.

In landscapes there is shown a subtile sense of the painter's art. The foregrounds are not full of unimportant details; there is no labored effort to present all of the details of foliage but all these parts of the picture are represented so skillfully by masses of light and shade that there is no danger of misinterpretation of the feeling of the artist, nor is the mind left to speculate over unimportant matters.

First Automobile a Shrine of Bacchus.

FEW, perhaps, are aware that the first automobile, considered in the sense of a vehicle containing within itself powers of locomotion, of which there is any authentic account, was a self-moving shrine of Bacchus.

This was the invention of Heron of Alexandria, who describes it in his work on automatic mechanism. The shrine in question was mounted upon two supporting and two driving wheels. On the axle of the driving wheels was a drum, about which was wound a rope, which passed upward through the space on one side of the shrine over pulleys, and was fastened to the ring of a ponderous lead weight, which rested upon a quantity of dry, fine sand. The escape of this sand through a small hole in the middle of the floor of the compartment containing it allowed the lead weight gradually to descend, and, by pulling upon the cord caused the shrine to move slowly forward in a straight line.

Heron describes the method of arranging and proportioning the wheels in case it was desired that the shrine move in a circular path. He also shows how the shrine can be constructed to move in straight lines at right angles to each other.

Officials of the Patent Office overlooked the device of Heron when they granted patents on slot machines, notwithstanding that, previously, Thomas Eubank, Commissioner of Patents, in 1850, illustrated and described Heron's invention. The mechanism of the latter is almost identical with that in the modern device, and simply serves as another proof of the saying, "There is nothing new under the sun."

The Largest Bird Cage in All America.

WASHINGTON, in addition to its other attractions, possesses the largest bird cage in the United States, perhaps in the world. It is 110 by 220 feet ground dimensions, and 130 feet high, and is located in the very heart of the city, at the busiest point in a busy section. It is, in fact, the court of the Postoffice building, and at times it is filled with sparrows, their twittering filling the air and lending a strange incongruity to the otherwise solemn surroundings of the great building. The birds enter the glass-covered court through the ventilating slats at the north and south ends near the peak of the roof, and only by accident do they find their way again to the open air. At times there are scores of them flying about within the enclosure, then a few disappear and others enter. Over the mail room on the ground floor there is a flat, glass-covered roof, partitioned off with planks, and on these latter are arranged many palms from the Botanic Gardens. Among these the birds disport themselves as in tropical freedom, and were food supplied them there is small doubt that they would engage to remain indefinitely in such comfortable quarters, for, after the first fright at seeming capture of a new bird, the little creatures seem to adapt themselves happily to their new quarters, and only when the pangs of hunger attack them do they make any attempt to find their way again to the open. Visitors watching them are at a loss to determine how they enter the court, for the slats are so high and so small in proportion to the immensity of the court, that they are difficult to observe.